United Nations A/68/83

General Assembly

Distr.: General
16 May 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Item 115 (c) of the preliminary list*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fourteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 6 May 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to forward herewith the aide-memoire (in French and English) covering Morocco's contribution to and achievements and commitments for the promotion and protection of human rights, prepared in conformity with General Assembly resolution 60/251 (see annex).

* A/68/50.

13-33823 (E) 030613

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Annex to the note verbale dated 6 May 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Candidature of Morocco to the Human Rights Council, 2014-2016

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

[Original: English and French]

1. In line with its internal democratic choices and with its sustained and irreversible commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights throughout the world, the Kingdom of Morocco decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the period 2014-2016.

Morocco's contributions and commitments in the field of human rights

2. The present aide-memoire presents Morocco's contribution, achievements and commitments for the promotion and protection of human rights, in keeping with General Assembly resolution 60/251.

3. The Kingdom's commitments to human rights herewith presented are the logical international extension of the national momentum created for democracy, the rule of law and human rights. They establish Morocco's deep-rooted attachment to the universal values of gender equality, pluralism, moderation, tolerance, peaceful coexistence and dialogue between civilizations and cultures.

4. As a founding member of the Human Rights Council, the Kingdom has continuously worked to strengthen its spirit of cooperation and dialogue and avoid politicization. It is in this vein that Morocco is firmly committed to defending the equality, interdependence and indivisibility of human rights.

5. The new Constitution of Morocco, adopted by referendum last July, confirms this choice of a democratic and modern society that respects human rights. It consolidates the framework and conditions for deeper commitment to human rights and, first and foremost, constitutionally guarantees the irreversibility of the progress achieved and commitments made by the Kingdom at the international level.

6. The constitutionalization of the primacy of international law over national law, the recognition of and respect for local cultural diversity, the criminalization of torture and enforced disappearances, together with the decision by Morocco to further open itself up to all the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, are further measures taken to reinforce the Kingdom's voluntary and concrete commitment to promote and protect human rights.

7. The Kingdom of Morocco has turned the promotion and protection of human rights into a fundamental dimension of its diplomacy and relationship with all of its partners at the United Nations and with its Maghreb, Arab-Muslim, Euro-Mediterranean and African neighbours, as well as of South-South cooperation and other partnership initiatives.

Morocco's contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights

1. State of implementation of commitments

8. Morocco has fulfilled all the commitments made in the framework of its first candidature to the Council in 2006, in keeping with General Assembly resolution 60/251. These achievements were consolidated through the following structural reforms:

(a) The reform of the justice system to strengthen the means and guarantees to better protect citizens;

(b) The constitutionalization of all the recommendations of the Equity and Reconciliation Commission;

(c) The strengthening of the institutional human rights system and its constitutionalization, especially through the creation or consolidation of 12 entities, including:

(i) The National Human Rights Council;

(ii) The "Al-Wassit" (office of the ombudsman);

(iii) The Authority for Parity and the Fight against All Forms of Discrimination;

(iv) The National Authority for Probity and the Fight against Corruption.

2. The role of Morocco at the Human Rights Council

Contribution to the work of the Council

9. Although it has not been a member of the Human Rights Council since 2007, Morocco has initiated several concrete actions on various key aspects of the promotion of human rights, including:

(a) The resolution for the creation of a special procedure for the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, in cooperation with Argentina and Switzerland;

(b) The resolution on technical assistance to developing countries, jointly with a group of countries, including Thailand;

(c) The resolution on enforced or involuntary disappearances, with France and Argentina;

(d) The joint statement on the negative impact of corruption on the enjoyment of human rights;

(e) The organization of a panel on the negative impact of corruption on the enjoyment of human rights, held during the twenty-second session of the Human Rights Council, during which the experience of the Instance centrale de prévention de la corruption in fighting corruption was presented.

10. Morocco acted as a moderator throughout the negotiations for many thematic resolutions, in particular the one on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping,

stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief.

11. Morocco co-sponsored 197 resolutions adopted by the Council since its inception, that is to say two thirds of all resolutions, a genuine testimony to Morocco's permanent and active commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights in the world.

12. Morocco actively supported the creation by the Human Rights Council of several special procedures, including the Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice, the Independent Expert in the field of cultural rights and the Special Rapporteurs on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation and on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association.

The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training

13. Together with Switzerland, in 2007 Morocco initiated a resolution in the Human Rights Council for the drafting of a United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training aimed at strengthening activities related to human rights education and training.

14. Adopted by consensus in 2011 by the General Assembly, the Declaration is the first international instrument initiated by the Human Rights Council and, as such, a reference document and a road map in this area for the years to come.

Commitment under the universal periodic review

15. Since the creation of the Human Rights Council, Morocco has greatly contributed to the implementation and consolidation of the universal periodic review mechanism. In this context, Morocco was appointed:

(a) Facilitator on the universal periodic review during the institutional building phase of the Council in 2006 and 2007;

(b) Facilitator on universal periodic review modalities in 2008;

(c) Facilitator for the universal periodic review in the framework of the five-year review of the Council, from November 2010 to March 2011;

(d) Facilitator on the follow-up to the universal periodic review adopted in June 2011.

16. Morocco has organized and facilitated training workshops, panel discussions and conferences on the universal periodic review, including two seminars in Rabat together with the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in 2008 and 2010 respectively.

17. Morocco organized, together with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, a debate on the universal periodic review, held in Geneva on 3 May 2013. The outcome of this seminar will be submitted in the form of a joint statement to the Human Rights Council at its twenty-third session, in June 2013.

18. In 2011, Morocco contributed $500,000 to the voluntary fund of the universal periodic review to provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries for the implementation of their commitments in the framework of the review.

19. During its own universal periodic review, in April 2008, Morocco accepted almost all the recommendations it received (11 of 13 or nearly 85 per cent) and rejected none.

20. Since 2008, Morocco has adopted a global approach to the follow-up to its review, going beyond the 11 recommendations accepted, by adopting the National Action Plan for Democracy and Human Rights. Morocco is therefore among the first countries in the world to have followed up on the recommendation of the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, to put in place such a plan of action. It is also the second Mediterranean country and the 27th country in the world to have implemented that recommendation.

3. Morocco and the General Assembly

The resolution on the ombudsman and the mediator

21. Morocco presented to the General Assembly a yearly resolution on the role of the ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, the first of its kind in the United Nations.

Morocco as a facilitator on the Human Rights Council review process in New York

22. As co-facilitator with Liechtenstein, Morocco contributed to the New York chapter of the review of the Human Rights Council.

4. Regional cooperation in the field of human rights

23. Under the status of "partner for democracy" granted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Kingdom has embarked in a process of gradual accession to the Council's relevant conventions on the protection of fundamental rights that are open to non-members of the Council of Europe.

24. Morocco's commitment to and action for human rights also involve its Arab and African neighbours through the initiation of and its active contribution to the consolidation of the standard-setting arsenal and the institutional scheme for the promotion and protection of human rights through the Arab plan for the promotion of the culture of human rights, in 2010, and the provision of technical assistance to African countries in connection with the right to development.

5. Ratification of international instruments and lifting of reservations

25. Morocco's action for human rights was enriched thanks to the strengthening of the relevant international legal arsenal. In this vein:

(a) The new Constitution now enshrines the primacy of international conventions over domestic law;

(b) The Kingdom ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its optional protocol in April 2009;

(c) The Kingdom ratified the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;

(d) The Kingdom acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

(e) The Kingdom has withdrawn several reservations to a number of international conventions. In this context, Morocco:

(i) Made a declaration, on 19 October 2006, recognizing the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to receive and consider individual communications under article 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;

(ii) Made a declaration, on 19 October 2006, recognizing the competence of the Committee against Torture to receive and consider communications from individuals, victims of violations of human rights under article 22 of the Convention against Torture and other Cruel and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

(iii) Withdrew, on 19 October 2006, its reservation on article 14 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the child's right to choose his or her religion and replaced it with an interpretative declaration;

(iv) Lifted, on 8 April 2011, its reservations on paragraph 2 of article 9 and on article 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

6. Cooperation with and support to special procedures

26. The Kingdom of Morocco attaches particular importance to strengthening the action of the special procedures of the Council.

27. In April 2011, the Kingdom of Morocco decided to further open itself up to the 33 thematic procedures of the Human Rights Council.

28. Over the years, the Kingdom of Morocco has been visited by several special procedures mandate holders working on various issues, namely by the Special Rapporteurs on the sale of children, on child prostitution and child pornography, on the rights of migrants, on the right to education, on cultural rights and on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as well as by the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice.

29. Upon the invitation of Morocco, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights aspects of the victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, will visit the country from 16 to 21 June 2013.

30. Morocco is currently discussing with two special procedures the possibility of other such visits in 2013, notably by the Working Group on arbitrary detention and the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

7. Cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

31. Morocco has continuously supported the activities and programmes of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

32. Since 2008, Morocco has been making an annual contribution of $1 million to the budget of the Office. With this voluntary and unearmarked contribution, Morocco moved up on the list of donors from 67th place in 2007 to 20th in 2010.

33. Morocco has organized several meetings in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, two of which were round tables on the role of the ombudsman in the promotion and protection of human rights and one a meeting on strengthening treaty bodies. Morocco will host an expert seminar to be organized by the Office on the relationship between freedom of expression and incitement to racial, national and religious hatred.

34. In 2010, Morocco presented the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with a draft agreement on tripartite cooperation for technical assistance to developing countries in implementing the recommendations arising from the universal periodic review.

8. The role of Moroccan civil society

35. The Kingdom of Morocco has engaged in a process aimed at raising awareness on the participation of civil society and Moroccan non-governmental organizations in sessions of the Human Rights Council and at supporting them in this endeavour. This is how Moroccan civil society has distinguished itself: by its active participation in and by being present at almost all the sessions of the Council.

36. In this respect, the Moroccan authorities' fundamental interest in community life is enshrined in article 170 of its Constitution, which provides for the creation of a youth and associative action council tasked with promoting the community life of young people in a spirit of responsible citizenship.

37. Civil society takes an active part in the drafting and implementation of human rights-related public policies and is fully involved in the various mechanisms for dialogue that have been set up.

9. The role of national institutions

38. In keeping with the international impetus given by national human rights institutions in the world, the National Council for Human Rights, Morocco's A-status national human rights institution, is acting as an independent and effective promoter of human rights at the national level, as well as in the framework of its cooperation with United Nations human rights institutions and mechanisms and the various national human rights bodies.

Future commitments

39. The Kingdom of Morocco shall:

(a) Further its action to promote human rights both nationally and internationally;

(b) Strive to improve the work of the universal periodic review;

(c) Maintain dialogue with special procedures regarding their visits and the activities carried out under their mandate and in the context of their cooperation with the Council;

(d) Continue to cooperate fully with the various treaty-monitoring bodies by presenting its periodic reports on time, by establishing an interactive dialogue with

the committees when the reports are examined and by actively following up on their recommendations;

(e) Promote the strengthening and optimization of the work of treaty bodies in the United Nations human rights system;

(f) Continue to support the work of the Human Rights Council as a key body of the United Nations for the promotion and protection of human rights;

(g) Maintain a participatory approach in the field of human rights through the direct involvement of citizens and of all actors and dynamic forces in Morocco, such as associations and non-governmental organizations;

(h) Continue its efforts to promote human rights education and training at the national and international levels;

(i) Share Morocco's experience in transitional justice and continue to support the Council's mechanisms and its initiatives in this area. In this respect, Morocco is considering strengthening its cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in this area, in particular by signing a memorandum of understanding on assistance in the field of transitional justice for developing countries, especially in Africa;

(j) Continue to harmonize its domestic legislation with international standards and, if need be, ratify the few international instruments Morocco is not yet a party to;

(k) Present, in 2014, an interim report on the status of implementation of the recommendations arising from the second universal periodic review of Morocco;

(l) Notify the United Nations of the ratification of the three following instruments, which were approved by the Council of Ministers on 12 November 2012, as soon as the ratification process finishes:

(i) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

(ii) Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

(iii) Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

(m) Notify the United Nations of the ratification of the third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was signed by Morocco in February 2012, once the required procedure has been finalized;

(n) Continue to take an active part in the work of the Human Rights Council, through:

(i) Constructive dialogue with the Council's mechanisms;

(ii) Concrete initiatives and parallel events for the promotion of human rights;

(iii) Cooperation with international non-governmental organizations;

(iv) Support to the Council's thematic initiatives.

United Nations A/68/84–E/2013/77

General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
20 May 2013

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session
Item 70 (a) of the preliminary list*
Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Economic and Social Council
Substantive session of 2013
Geneva, 1-25 July 2013
Item 5 of the provisional agenda**
Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. The report is also submitted in response to Assembly resolution 67/87 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/3. The period covered by the report is from June 2012 to May 2013.

The report describes the major humanitarian trends and challenges over the past year and analyses two thematic issues: the need to reduce vulnerability and manage risks and the need to promote humanitarian innovation. The report provides an overview of current efforts to improve humanitarian coordination and response, as well as recommendations for further improvement.

* A/67/252 and Add.1.
** E/2013/100.

13-34114 (E) 110613

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I. Introduction

1. Humanitarian needs exacerbated by civil unrest, human rights violations and conflict during the reporting period are a reminder of the increasingly complex and difficult operating environment in which humanitarian assistance must be delivered and the need for greater adherence to humanitarian principles, timely access to affected populations and better protection of civilians.

2. The global number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) resulting from armed conflict and generalized violence at the end of 2012 was estimated at 28.8 million, an increase from 26.4 million reported in 2011 and the highest figure ever recorded by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. An estimated 2.1 million IDPs were able to return home in 2012; however, around 6.5 million people were newly displaced — almost twice as many as in 2011. Some 17.7 million IDPs were being protected and/or assisted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at the end of 2012. More than 1.1 million people became refugees in the course of 2012, the highest number in more than a decade. The number of refugees under the mandate of UNHCR stood at 10.5 million at the end of 2012.

3. The Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters recorded 310 disasters in 2012, which claimed an estimated 9,300 lives, affected 106 million people and caused over $138 billion in damages. The significant decrease in the number of people affected from 2011 can be partly explained by the lack of a "mega" natural disaster in 2012. Despite the decrease in fatalities, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, an estimated 32.4 million people in 82 countries were newly displaced by natural disasters, almost double the number from 2011. It was also the third consecutive year for economic disaster losses to have exceeded $100 billion.

4. As in previous years, there has been an increase in demand for humanitarian assistance, while the operating environment for delivering such assistance becomes more complex. Humanitarian responders are more numerous and diverse, affected States, regional organizations and neighbouring countries have increased their capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies, and technological advances are providing a voice to affected people and changing the nature of how assistance is provided. It will be essential over the coming years for the international system to find ways to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by this new environment and how to respond more effectively to its challenges and demands.

II. Overview of humanitarian emergencies

A. Complex emergencies

5. The humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic deteriorated rapidly, with the number of people in need quadrupling from 1 million in March 2012 to 4 million by the end of the year. As at 26 April 2013, an estimated 6.8 million people were in urgent need of assistance, including around 4.25 million people internally displaced. An additional 1.4 million people have fled the conflict as refugees to Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt and other parts of North Africa.

6. Conflict in northern Mali, along with the impact of the food and nutrition crisis in the region, has displaced more than 467,000 people since March 2012 (close to 292,700 IDPs and 175,300 refugees in Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso). Close to 750,000 people are in need of immediate food assistance, while a further 1.3 million are food insecure. Approximately 4 million people require water and sanitation assistance country-wide, while 2 million are in need of health support; and 200,000 children have no access to education. Military operations, mine incidents and violence by armed groups continue to create a highly volatile environment.

7. In Myanmar, inter-communal violence that broke out in Rakhine State in June and October 2012 resulted in the deaths of 167 people, the injury of 223 others and the destruction of 10,100 private, public and religious buildings. As at 27 March 2013, 125,000 people remained displaced and curfews were still in place in nine locations. Inter-communal violence also broke out in Meiktila, in Mandalay region, on 20 March 2013, resulting in 44 deaths and over 12,000 people displaced. In the Central African Republic, fighting since December 2012 had displaced more than 222,000 people as at 7 May 2013 (173,000 internally displaced and 49,000 refugees to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of Congo, Cameroon and Chad).

8. The reporting period also saw the intensification of existing complex emergencies and conflicts, causing further displacement. As at 31 March 2013, there were nearly 2.6 million IDPs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including 1.6 million in the Kivus, as a result of fighting between Government forces and armed groups such as the 23 March Movement (M23). The conflict also expanded in Maniema and Katanga provinces and had renewed regional implications with waves of Congolese refugees arriving in Rwanda and Uganda. Inter-tribal fighting and conflict between armed groups and the Sudanese Armed Forces in Darfur (Sudan) has led to the internal displacement of approximately 237,000 people and an influx of an estimated 27,000 refugees into Chad. Also in the Sudan, conflict between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North continued in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States, leaving around 1.3 million displaced, including 32,000 refugees in Ethiopia and 197,000 in South Sudan.

9. South Sudan hosts 27,800 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and the Central African Republic. In Jonglei State, South Sudan, more than 12,400 people have been displaced by inter-communal fighting since the beginning of 2013, and tens of thousands more are thought to be affected in inaccessible areas. There are still more than 1 million Somali refugees in the Horn of Africa (over 492,000 in Kenya and more than 240,000 in Ethiopia) and 1.1 million IDPs in Somalia.

10. Inter-tribal fighting in Yemen led to the displacement of a further 38,500 people in the north (Hajjah) in 2012. Across the country over 344,000 people remain displaced. While more than 80 per cent of internally displaced people in the south have returned home, only small-scale returns have taken place in the north of the country, where approximately 322,450 people remain displaced. Yemen hosts 242,000 refugees, approximately 95 per cent from Somalia, as well as an estimated 100,000 migrants, mostly from Ethiopia. Clan violence and armed conflict across Mindanao, Philippines, displaced at least 150,000 people in 2012.

11. In Afghanistan, the protracted armed conflict continues to displace people and impact the return of refugees. There are some 534,000 conflict-induced IDPs in

Afghanistan, with more than 81,000 persons having been displaced in the reporting period alone. According to UNHCR, nearly 2.5 million Afghan refugees live in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. In 2012, more than 94,300 refugees returned to Afghanistan, approximately 33,000 from Pakistan and 14,800 from the Islamic Republic of Iran, as part of the UNHCR-assisted voluntary repatriation programme (representing a 62 per cent increase from 2011). However, a number of security and political uncertainties related to the ongoing transition are likely to continue challenging further returns and are limiting the country's absorption capacity.

12. In Pakistan, an escalation of hostilities in the Tirah Valley of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in March 2012 resulted in a new wave of displacement. As at 7 May 2013, UNHCR had registered some 80,000 newly displaced persons. While there continue to be significant returns each year, some 1 million people remain displaced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

13. In November 2012, 100 Palestinian civilians and 4 Israeli civilians were killed in the worst outbreak of violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since Operation Cast Lead in 2009. Despite some adjustments made by the Israeli authorities in recent years, the blockade on the Gaza Strip, now entering its seventh year, continues to cause high levels of unemployment and food insecurity, leaving the majority of people in Gaza aid dependent. The number of demolitions and displacements in Area C of the West Bank, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, has grown steadily since 2009. In 2012, 886 Palestinians were displaced and 598 Palestinian-owned structures demolished. As at 15 April 2013, 156 structures had been demolished in 2013, displacing 309 people.

14. There was some positive, yet tentative, progress in peace negotiations and the return of displaced persons in several countries. On 7 October 2012, the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the country's largest Muslim rebel group, reached a historic peace agreement that set the framework for a final peace accord that seeks to end four decades of armed conflict that has cost 120,000 lives. In Yemen, some 143,000 persons displaced by fighting in the south from mid-2011 to mid-2012 returned to Abyan, but they face a difficult situation owing to extensive damage to civilian buildings and infrastructure, landmines and unexploded ordnance, lack of livelihoods and services and weak rule of law and security. On 18 October 2012, peace negotiations between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia started in Oslo and continued in Havana. However, since the talks were announced, figures show an increasing trend in hostilities and attacks against infrastructure.

B. Disasters associated with natural hazards

15. Typhoon Bopha, which hit eastern Mindanao, in the Philippines, on 4 December 2012, resulted in the largest loss of life from a natural disaster in 2012. Government sources report that at least 1,900 people were killed or are missing and nearly 233,000 homes were damaged. Over 6.2 million people were affected, including more than 934,000 people who were left homeless. However, owing to preparedness measures, including early warnings, pre-emptive evacuations and pre-positioning of essential stocks and response personnel, it is widely believed that

more lives were saved during Typhoon Bopha than during Tropical Storm Washi in the Philippines in 2011. This was despite Typhoon Bopha having had three times the wind speed and twice the rainfall of Tropical Storm Washi.

16. Although Asia was the continent that experienced the greatest number of natural disasters and the highest death toll in 2012, the Americas endured 63 per cent of the economic losses. That was owed mainly to Hurricane Sandy, which hit the eastern seaboard of the United States of America and the Caribbean region in October 2012, causing over $50 billion in damage, and the drought that affected 62 per cent of the landmass of the continental United States, causing an estimated loss of $20 billion.

17. More than 18 million people across the Sahel region, including an estimated 1.1 million children at risk of severe acute malnutrition, continued to be affected by drought, its impact compounded by chronic poverty, low agricultural productivity and high food prices. Early warning and the rapid mobilization of funds enabled swift humanitarian action in nine countries, mitigating the humanitarian impact. Between June and September 2012, for example, approximately 5 million people received food assistance each month. During 2012, 915,000 children were admitted to therapeutic feeding centres across the Sahel.

18. Nigeria suffered the worst flooding in more than 40 years, with the Government reporting 363 deaths, 2.1 million registered IDPs and an estimated 7.7 million people affected by the floods. Pakistan was again hit by large-scale flooding that affected around 5 million people, causing 473 deaths, injuring 2,900 people and damaging 466,000 houses. Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh provinces were hardest hit. Flooding also struck India, killing over 100 people and displacing over 2 million in Assam in July 2012. In Afghanistan, a number of natural disasters of various scales were recorded during the reporting period, affecting 280,000 people and damaging or destroying 35,000 houses.

19. The earthquake that hit the Islamic Republic of Iran on 11 August 2012 killed more than 300 people and was the most devastating earthquake of the reporting period. On 20 April 2013, an earthquake of magnitude 7 hit the city of Ya'an in the Sichuan province of China. As at 23 April 2013, 193 people were reported dead and approximately 12,200 injured. According to the Civil Affairs Department of Sichuan, approximately 2 million people in 115 counties are affected.

III. Progress in the coordination of humanitarian assistance

A. Strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance

Capacity and coordination in the field

20. In 2012, the principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee agreed on an action plan outlining clear responsibilities for implementing the Committee transformative agenda recommendations to improve humanitarian leadership, coordination and accountability at the headquarters and field levels. Inter-agency missions to Chad, Myanmar and South Sudan ensured field testing of the new policies and procedures and identified good practice that could be applied to other countries. Five transformative agenda protocols were agreed at the end of 2012 and

an additional three are to be agreed in 2013. They provide practical guidance for field staff to support improved collective action in humanitarian emergencies.[1]

21. In order to ensure that appropriate humanitarian leadership is available from the outset of a large-scale emergency, a roster has been established of 18 Assistant Secretary-General and Director-level candidates from six Inter-Agency Standing Committee agencies who are available for deployment within 72 hours to oversee a large-scale crisis. Effective leadership remains critical in humanitarian emergencies. In 2012, 12 Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator positions were filled from the Humanitarian Coordinator pool, a roster of experienced humanitarian leaders supported by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. To provide additional support to first-time humanitarian coordinators, a mentoring programme was established, with former senior and experienced resident coordinators/humanitarian coordinators who can advise on managerial, structural and strategic issues. The establishment of the inter-agency rapid response mechanism will further support the deployment of senior and experienced humanitarian personnel following a humanitarian crisis.

22. In 2012, efforts continued to improve the collective delivery of results by the United Nations and its partners through effective coordination mechanisms. A survey and analysis of the activated clusters in 25 countries in October 2012 indicated that 78 per cent of clusters now have strategic plans and 81 per cent have coordinated needs assessment. Extending the participation of appropriate government and national actors in clusters, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), remains a priority. Currently, 75 per cent of clusters have government participation, while national NGOs participate in 90 per cent of established clusters. Regular performance reviews of clusters are taking place to ensure that they remain relevant in evolving situations and are in line with national structures where appropriate. In Burundi, for example, clusters were formally deactivated in August 2012, reflecting a decrease in emergency needs. Support is now provided through government-led sectors.

23. To further implement the commitments of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to improve accountability to affected people, including through greater transparency, feedback and complaints mechanisms, and participation in programme design, monitoring and evaluation, a number of United Nations agencies have taken steps to better integrate these elements into their programmes and policies. For example, in Pakistan, the World Food Programme (WFP), in collaboration with Transparency International, has established a direct feedback and complaints system with local people using mobile phones, e-mail and post. The system responds to complaints and concerns and provides information about available assistance, which helps WFP make its programming informed, accountable and responsive. WFP has started to replicate this model in other countries, including Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Kenya.

24. In 2013, the IASC will continue to build upon its commitment to strengthen country preparedness. It is developing a common framework for capacity-building

[1] Although fully supportive of the transformative agenda process, in order to maintain their independence, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which are not members of, but standing invitees to, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, are not signatories to the 2012 transformative agenda protocols.

for emergency preparedness, which will combine the efforts of humanitarian and development organizations at the country level to develop, support and complement the capacity of national and local governments and communities to anticipate and prepare for emergencies.

25. Strengthening legal preparedness continues to be essential for the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance. Mexico and Namibia adopted new legal arrangements drawing on the Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance, and over a dozen States have relevant legislation currently pending. More States need to establish clear rules and procedures to prevent the most common regulatory problems, such as delays in entry permissions for relief personnel, goods, equipment and transport and oversight gaps with regard to the quality and appropriateness of incoming assistance in large international response operations. The Guidelines and their accompanying Model Act can help States to anticipate and avoid such problems.

Broadening partnerships

26. During the reporting period, the United Nations continued to strengthen its partnerships at the global, regional and national levels. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations has been supporting 29 countries and regional organizations through the Member States-led Enhancing International Humanitarian Partnerships. The Partnerships endeavour to enhance transparency and accountability in mobilizing resources, upgrading information management and strengthening coordination at all levels by fostering alliances among government departments responsible for humanitarian assistance, the private sector and civil society.

27. In partnership with the African regional economic communities, the United Nations is working with African partners to develop emergency rosters, strengthen networks of disaster managers, deploy rapid response teams, disburse humanitarian funds and improve crisis-related information management. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs supported the humanitarian department of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), including through outreach and capacity-building work with OIC-affiliated NGOs, in addition to a joint partnership mission to the Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso. In the Asia and Pacific region, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs launched the Asia Pacific guide for disaster managers, a guide to assist national disaster management organizations with regard to available international services and tools to support their response and preparedness capability.

28. Engagement at the global and strategic levels on policy and operational issues has also been strengthened. In May 2012, the Government of Turkmenistan, OIC and UNHCR organized the International Ministerial Conference on Refugees in the Muslim World. Noting that most of the refugees in the world are hosted by OIC member States, the Conference adopted the Ashgabat Declaration urging the international community, in cooperation with UNHCR and other relevant international organizations, to redouble efforts to address the root causes of refugee situations. Member States and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs have also continued to improve dialogue on humanitarian issues, including through the informal dialogue on humanitarian partnership, co-chaired by Sweden and Brazil, and the disaster response dialogue, a joint initiative of Switzerland, the

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, IFRC and the International Council of Voluntary Agencies.

Humanitarian financing

29. In 2012, at least 100 countries, as well as private sector organizations and individuals, contributed towards a total of $12.7 billion[2] in funding both within and outside the consolidated appeals process. This was an overall decrease from recent years, which may be explained by the absence of any "mega" natural disaster. Funding through the consolidated appeals process in absolute terms and in proportion to consolidated appeal requirements was similar to that of 2011: $5.6 billion funded out of $8.9 billion requested (63 per cent) in both years.

30. Member States and the private sector contributed $427 million in pledges and contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund. These contributions, along with funds transferred from the Central Emergency Response Fund loan window and reserves carried over from 2011, allowed the Emergency Relief Coordinator to allocate some $485 million to implement life-saving activities in emergencies in 44 countries and territories, the highest annual amount allocated since the Fund's inception in 2006.

31. Country-based pooled funds — Common Humanitarian Funds and Emergency Response Funds — received a total of $472 million in donor contributions in 2012. This year, new country-based pooled funds were established in South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic. The Common Humanitarian Funds were introduced in 2006 to provide timely and predictable funding to the most critical humanitarian needs as identified in the consolidated appeals process. In 2012, contributions to the five Common Humanitarian Funds reached an all-time high of $386 million, with 58 per cent of total funds allocated to NGOs.

32. In 1997, Emergency Response Funds were established with the purpose of providing humanitarian assistance for new and unforeseen emergency needs through support to international and national NGOs. There are currently Emergency Response Funds active in 13 countries. In 2012, the Funds received $86 million in contributions, allocating 70 per cent to NGOs. A global Emergency Response Fund evaluation conducted during the reporting period found that the Funds can have a valuable role in the humanitarian financing architecture despite the relatively small size of the funds.

33. In order to improve the humanitarian response to protracted crises and promote a response that contributes to building the resilience of vulnerable communities, new multi-year consolidated appeals processes are being piloted. In 2011, a three-year consolidated appeals process for Kenya was issued, and in 2013 a new three-year consolidated appeals process was issued for Somalia with phased objectives and targets that are tailored to the country context with a dual focus on life-saving interventions and resilience-building initiatives. The multi-year consolidated appeals processes will improve transition planning and financing and contribute towards better alignment of humanitarian and development programming. The use of multi-year consolidated appeals processes could be considered for other protracted crises where the situation is unlikely to fluctuate dramatically over an extended period of time.

[2] As recorded by the Financial Tracking Service as at 3 April 2013 at http://fts.unocha.org/.

Information management and needs assessment

34. In response to the increasing volume and scope of data generated in humanitarian emergencies, significant work has been undertaken within the international humanitarian system to develop guidance on best practice in needs assessment and underlying information management. There has also been an increasing awareness of the importance of needs assessment and information management and associated good practice. For example, UNHCR and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have both introduced information management strategies, and the response to the release of the IASC Operational Guidance on Coordinated Assessments in Humanitarian Crises has been positive, with both host Governments and humanitarian country teams requesting assistance in customizing and implementing the guidelines. The launch of humanitarianresponse.info and UNHCR regional web portals for refugee response (http://data.unhcr.org) has facilitated the access of humanitarian actors to operational information and relevant resources.

35. While there has been progress in developing guidance for improved information management, challenges still remain in translating this guidance into practice at the operational level. Demand for technically skilled capacity to undertake effective needs assessments and information management in the field widely exceeds current supply. While efforts are being made to address this, more could be done to build the information management capacity of Governments and local NGOs. A data-rich evidence base requires physical access to areas of humanitarian needs, access to data already collected and for datasets to be compatible to enable cross-analysis of information, all of which remain a challenge in many emergencies.

36. Organizations participating in humanitarian action are encouraged to follow data standards, such as the IASC Common Operational Datasets when organizing their data and to provide open access to the data when protection and security concerns allow it. Such measures would facilitate the compilation of a wide range of data into a series of easily consumable information products aimed at decision-makers in emergency situations. These products would directly support national and international responders and affected communities in preparing for and responding to crises.

Improving humanitarian action for all

37. Humanitarian crises do not affect all people evenly. For humanitarian action to be effective, it must be shaped by an understanding of the different needs of women, girls, boys and men, persons with disabilities, adolescents and the elderly to ensure that they have equal access to and benefit from services.

38. The IASC Gender Marker is a practical tool that grades consolidated appeals process projects on how well they ensure that the different needs of women, girls, boys and men are integrated into humanitarian programming. In 2013, the IASC Gender Marker was applied in 16 consolidated appeals processes and five country-based pooled funds, with 52 per cent of the projects identified as having the potential to contribute significantly to gender equality. As the Gender Marker was only mandatory in consolidated appeals processes from 2012, it will be important to ensure that efforts to integrate gender concerns into project design are implemented

and monitored to ensure that humanitarian programmes are benefiting women, girls, boys and men equally.

39. In humanitarian emergencies people can be placed at increased risk of gender-based violence as institutions and systems that provide physical and social protection may be weakened or destroyed. Families and communities are often separated, which can result in a further breakdown of existing community support systems and protection mechanisms. The IASC has scaled up efforts to strengthen gender-based violence prevention and response during humanitarian emergencies. A new rapid response team was deployed on 18 missions in 14 humanitarian emergencies to support humanitarian actors in ensuring that actions to prevent and respond to gender-based violence were addressed across their sectoral programmes. More could be done by Governments and humanitarian organizations to provide and fund specific programmes that address gender-based violence concerns, including counselling, connecting survivors to assistance and providing safety to women and girls in humanitarian emergencies.

40. United Nations agencies have also made progress in integrating the needs of persons with disabilities into humanitarian action. For example, UNHCR adopted its own operational guidelines *Working with Persons with Disabilities in Forced Displacement*, and is providing technical support on disability inclusion to their country operations through partner organizations. UNICEF is also developing a disabilities strategy that will address issues of equity for persons living with disability in humanitarian emergencies. However, while steps are being taken by individual humanitarian organizations, there is a need for standards and guidelines that systematically integrate the needs of persons with disabilities and older people into humanitarian programming. For example, a study conducted by HelpAge International and Handicap International[3] identified that only 1.6 per cent and 0.78 per cent of projects submitted for the consolidated appeals process or flash appeals in 2010 and 2011 included one or more activities targeting people with disabilities and older people, respectively.

41. While progress has been made in the collection of sex, age and disability disaggregated data, more could be done to systematically collect and analyse this data to inform the design, the implementation and the monitoring of humanitarian programming.

B. Strengthening adherence to humanitarian principles and access to populations

Operating in high-risk environments

42. Despite humanitarian workers efforts to strengthen operational security in insecure environments, attacks that have led to death, kidnapping or serious injury continue to exact a heavy toll on humanitarian personnel. Preliminary records of the Aid Worker Security Database for 2012[4] show that the numbers of aid workers killed and seriously wounded decreased by 58 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively,

[3] "A Study of Humanitarian Financing for Older People and People with Disabilities, 2010-2011" (HelpAge International and Handicap International, Lyon, 2012).

[4] Available from https://aidworkersecurity.org/incidents. Figures may change as data collection for 2012 is not finalized.

against the average of the previous 10 years. Kidnappings and the use of explosive weapons in populated areas became the most frequent means of violence against aid workers, with kidnappings increasing by 49 per cent and the use of explosive weapons resulting in the death of 6 aid workers, while 23 others were seriously wounded. This is indicative of a broader concern over the humanitarian impact of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Member States, the United Nations and its partners need to identify policy and operational options that might be taken to protect civilians from the short and long-term effects of such weapons.

43. In spite of special protection afforded by international humanitarian law and applicable international human rights law for health care and health-care providers, in many countries attacks or threats directed against health-care personnel, facilities, vehicles and services continue to prevent the wounded and sick from receiving the care and protection they require. From January to December 2012, ICRC documented more than 921 incidents that have affected the delivery of health care to people in need. In 91 per cent of the incidents registered, local health-care providers were directly affected by violence, primarily in the form of threats.

44. In the light of these challenges, humanitarian workers, including health-care personnel, must work together to manage security risks in the most complex environments, including through engagement with communities to build acceptance and trust; by implementing effective security measures that balance risk against the humanitarian imperative; and sharing security information, assets and expertise among humanitarian actors. Host States possess clear formal responsibility for the safety and security of aid workers. More can be done to strengthen coordination between host States and humanitarian organizations to enhance the safety and security of humanitarian personnel while at the same time maintaining humanitarian access in order to reach those in most need.

Humanitarian access

45. Making sure that humanitarian organizations are able to access people in need is fundamental to saving lives. For example, it is essential to move goods and personnel to where they are needed and to ensure that affected people fully benefit from available assistance and protection. In situations of armed conflict, under international humanitarian law the primary responsibility for protecting and meeting the needs of civilians lies with the party under whose control they find themselves. If the party is unable or unwilling to do so, humanitarian agencies can offer their services. Such offers must not be considered as interference in domestic affairs, and consent to relief operations must not be arbitrarily denied. Parties to the conflict must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need. These obligations must be respected, including in situations where the most effective means of achieving rapid access involves humanitarian operations that cross lines of conflict or international borders.

46. The data in the access monitoring and reporting framework of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs shows that the access constraints that were most common in 2012 and that had the most severe consequences for affected people were: (a) restrictions on the movement of humanitarian workers or goods; (b) active hostilities; (c) interference in humanitarian activities; and (d) violence against humanitarian workers.

47. Humanitarian access should not be imposed through the use of force, as association of humanitarian action with armed actors can undermine the neutrality of the response and compromise the safety and access of humanitarian workers and the people they serve. Therefore, humanitarian access needs to be constantly negotiated with all relevant parties. "Humanitarian negotiations" are generally understood as negotiations conducted by humanitarian actors with relevant parties in order to achieve purely humanitarian objectives, such as access to carry out needs assessments, and to provide assistance and protection. Negotiations should not, for example, be confused with or linked to political mediation. Nor should engagement with non-State armed groups for the purposes of humanitarian negotiation be interpreted as conferring any degree of political legitimacy upon such groups.

48. An example of good practice is the new approach to humanitarian access that was implemented by the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies during the polio campaign in Afghanistan (2012/13), in which 11 million children were vaccinated. That approach was based on increasing engagement at the local community level in order to achieve better acceptance of the campaign. As a result, there were improvements in the analysis of local situations, which led to more accurate risk assessments. Another key step was the increased involvement of all sides in negotiating access, which, with better quality and real time information, improved the safety and security of the health personnel involved in the campaign.

49. Despite examples of good practice and the clear obligations imposed by international humanitarian law, access is frequently delayed, impeded or denied. In some cases, the imposition of constraints on access can amount to violation of international humanitarian law. More must be done to ensure accountability for grave instances of deliberate delays or denials of access for humanitarian operations, as well as attacks against humanitarian workers, including through referrals to the International Criminal Court or domestic prosecutions.

Protection

50. The protection of people from harm is a fundamental component of the principle of humanity and therefore a core objective of all humanitarian action. Protection encompasses all activities aimed at securing full respect for the rights of individuals in accordance with international law — international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law. The aim of protection is to create an environment in which dignity is respected, specific patterns of abuse are prevented or their immediate effects alleviated, and dignified conditions of life are restored.

51. Protecting people from harm requires a comprehensive response from the humanitarian community involving legal, policy, operational and advocacy elements. In situations where people face grave violations of international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law, it is particularly critical that humanitarian actors work closely together to ensure a principled and coordinated response. In these situations Member States must also advocate and use their leverage with the relevant parties to advance the protection of civilians.

52. While protection challenges can be particularly acute in situations of conflict, sudden or recurrent natural hazards can also cause or worsen protection problems such as large-scale displacement; gender-based violence; family separation; child trafficking; and unequal access to assistance.

53. During the reporting period, Member States, with the support of United Nations agencies and other humanitarian partners, have taken steps to better address protection concerns, in particular for IDPs. The Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyani, supported Kenya in developing a holistic policy framework and landmark legislation on the protection and assistance of IDPs and other affected communities, which was adopted in 2012. The Philippines similarly adopted legislation on the protection and assistance of IDPs, and Afghanistan is in the process of developing a national IDP policy. In December 2012, the African Union Convention on the Protection of and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, the first regional legally binding treaty on internal displacement, came into force with 17 African countries having ratified the Convention. The treaty applies to displacement generated by a range of causes, including armed conflict, human rights violations, natural disasters and the effects of climate change. Working with the African Union and the African Commission on International Law, UNHCR is currently supporting the development of a model law to assist signatory States to implement the Convention. Member States should continue to address protection concerns, including by providing adequate resources.

Impact of counter-terrorism measures

54. In recent years, humanitarian organizations have grown increasingly concerned about the impact of counter-terrorism legislation and other measures that criminalize the engagement of humanitarian organizations with certain non-State armed groups or that otherwise impede principled humanitarian action. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Norwegian Refugee Council have commissioned an independent study on the impact of national counter-terrorism measures on humanitarian action. The study will include a review of relevant national legislation, an analysis of provisions in funding agreements limiting or imposing conditions on humanitarian activities and a review of how different humanitarian actors have responded to such measures.

IV. Towards a more inclusive, interoperable and effective international humanitarian system[5]

55. The humanitarian operating environment has changed considerably since the international system was created by the General Assembly through its resolution 46/182. Humanitarian caseloads have continued to increase owing to conflict, disasters caused by natural hazards and "chronic crises" in which people who are already vulnerable experience periods of acute vulnerability and humanitarian need. This trend is expected to continue, owing to climate variability, population growth and other demographic changes, including rapid urbanization, financial and energy sector pressures and changing geopolitical factors.

[5] The international humanitarian system can be broadly defined as the network of international humanitarian actors who are functionally connected through the framework for coordination established by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/182 and its subsequent resolutions, which includes the Emergency Relief Coordinator, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and planning and financing mechanisms, and are guided by a commitment to the guiding principles, humanitarian principles and international law.

56. At the same time, many national Governments and other actors have bolstered their capacities for disaster management over the years, including through developing new regional and national polices and systems for disaster management. This has led to an important shift by humanitarian organizations towards recognizing the more prominent role affected Governments, militaries, local communities, regional organizations and neighbouring countries have, and seek to further develop, in preparing for and responding to emergencies. As more Member States reach middle income status, become donors or providers of in-kind assistance and share their experience and expertise, they are also setting out their interests and expectations of the international humanitarian system. The number of non-governmental organizations operating in humanitarian emergencies has also grown, with the largest recent increases being the number of actors from the global South.

57. In addition, the rise and proliferation of new technologies in crisis-affected countries, including mobile phones and social media, is making it easier for local actors and communities to communicate wants and needs and to self-organize. This change is also bringing important new players into humanitarian response, including local telecommunication companies and Internet service providers, and radically changing the roles of others, such as diaspora groups and volunteers.

58. These changes require the international humanitarian system to continue to adapt current approaches to better work with national and local actors, communities and emerging actors such as the private sector. For example, many of these actors already have in place, or will seek to develop, their own systems and processes for responding to humanitarian emergencies. Given these developments, it will be important for the United Nations and its partners to be able to operate with these new systems and networks in order to maximize use of available capacity, improve overall coordination and together provide humanitarian assistance to more people. In order to improve this "interoperability", the development of new and complementary standard operating procedures between the international humanitarian system and other actors, such as the private sector, the military and the volunteer and technical community, may be required.

Humanitarian effectiveness

59. The international humanitarian system must also ensure it is as effective as possible to meet the challenges resulting from a changing humanitarian landscape. While there is no agreed definition of humanitarian effectiveness, there is strong consensus that the fundamental goal of humanitarian action is to save lives and alleviate suffering. Humanitarian effectiveness is often discussed in terms of transparency, relevance, readiness, performance, speed of response, value for money and accountability to affected countries, people and donors. However, what constitutes "effectiveness" will often depend on the context of the crisis — natural disasters compared to conflicts or situations of chronic vulnerability — and th perspective of the stakeholder (affected people, affected States, donors, humanitarian organizations and other key actors).

60. There is a need to develop a greater understanding of how these different perspectives on what constitutes effectiveness interrelate and how they apply in different humanitarian situations. Such an understanding is important in ensuring that all actors are contributing towards more effective humanitarian action and for

promoting greater accountability. It will be essential to draw upon existing initiatives such as the IASC transformative agenda, the Joint Standards Initiative and the Good Humanitarian Donorship, as well as existing best practice in developing greater understanding.

A. Innovation

Why we need innovation

61. Increasing humanitarian caseloads and the rapid growth of technology is providing new opportunities for innovation in humanitarian action. Ericsson has predicted that there will be 3.3 billion smartphone subscriptions, with the majority of those in the developing world, by 2018. Other new technologies, from advances in water filtration, solar power or 3-D printing, have the vast potential to transform the way humanitarian organizations work, for example, by enabling people in refugee camps to produce life-saving items locally, with minimal logistical and infrastructure implications. But innovation is not just about new technologies or "inventions". It is also about the creation of new products and the adoption of approaches, processes, partnerships and positions, often in combination, that can address systemic challenges.

62. For example, following the 2008 post-election violence in Kenya, humanitarian organizations adopted the use of M-PESA, a nationwide electronic cash service that allowed NGOs, whose food distributions were becoming costly and problematic in an insecure environment, to transfer money through short message service to people in need of assistance. The use of cash transfers — and now mobile cash transfers — has demonstrated how new approaches to distribution of aid can, in appropriate environments, make emergency response faster and more cost-effective, streamline the footprint, improve human dignity and alleviate access constraints. Taking advantage of these innovations and new ways of working will be critical to ensure that humanitarian actors respond with the best partnerships, services, skills and products in a changing world.

63. While innovation is not new to the humanitarian system, most innovations have been ad hoc and the system is often slow to adapt to new ways of working. The increasingly rapid pace of global and technological change has seen an increasing interest in finding ways to systematically increase the pace of innovation and adaption. For example, UNHCR has been developing a Refugee Housing Unit that seeks to find new solutions to creating better living conditions for refugees. It is working with universities, the private sector and foundations. UNICEF has been supporting the development of a Rapid Family Tracing and Reunification (RapidFTR) system through an open source, volunteer-driven project. However, many innovations are piloted but never scaled up or used by the wider humanitarian community.

Supporting humanitarian innovation

64. The challenge for the international humanitarian system in terms of innovation is not in simply doing something novel, but in learning from past experiences (both positive and negative) and applying the lessons learned in a way that improves effectiveness. Enabling greater innovation in humanitarian response will require more investment in research and development to adapt ideas and technologies to

humanitarian uses; organizational reform to create internal structures and cultures that are conducive to implementing innovative practices; learning from practices at the regional and country levels; more involvement of affected people, including adopting more ideas developed by communities themselves; greater involvement of other actors, including the private sector; and the development of standards to ensure that innovative approaches are in line with humanitarian ethics.

B. Reducing vulnerability and managing risks of humanitarian crises

65. Given the changing and interconnected drivers of crisis, Governments, humanitarian and development actors need to work in ways that reduce and manage the risk of crises, rather than simply responding to their impact. This approach requires a better understanding of the drivers of crisis, preventing them from occurring when possible, mitigating the impact when they do occur and promoting sustainable recovery. It also requires deep local knowledge to support the development of practical and effective policies.

Understanding risk and risk management

66. The risk that a humanitarian crisis may occur is a result of both hazards and vulnerability. Hazards are threats to human life and livelihoods and include natural hazards, conflict, technological and industrial accidents, and other shocks, such as food and fuel price spikes. People affected by humanitarian crises may be affected simultaneously by more than one shock or hazard. Vulnerability is the likelihood that an individual or community will suffer adverse effects of being exposed to a hazard. The level of vulnerability of people and communities is a result of many, generally pre-existing, physical, social, economic and environmental factors. Poverty and gender and other forms of inequality are major factors of vulnerability. Poor people are less likely to have the resources to cope in an emergency. Women may be affected differently from men because of gender roles that often determine their social status or family responsibilities. Managing the risk therefore involves addressing hazards, hazard exposure[6] and vulnerability.

67. There are a number of approaches currently being applied by the humanitarian sector and more widely that contribute to managing the risk of humanitarian crises occurring. The "resilience'" approach includes better alignment between humanitarian and development programming to promote sustainable development by better anticipating the conditions that cause crises in order to prevent, better prepare for, respond and recover from them. Resilience encompasses a number of areas, including (a) disaster risk reduction, which seeks to reduce risks associated with natural hazards and climate change; (b) environmental hazard management that addresses technological and industrial hazards; (c) early recovery, which integrates development activities into humanitarian response at the onset of a crisis; and (d) conflict prevention, which aims to reduce the risk of violence and armed conflicts.

68. However, while all these areas seek to contribute to the same outcomes — reduced impact and successful social and economic development — ways of

[6] Exposure is the presence of people, livelihoods and assets in places that could be adversely affected by hazards.

working in the humanitarian and development communities are often not sufficiently aligned to systematically manage the risk of humanitarian crises. For example, a focus on disaster risk reduction may reduce the risks associated with natural hazards, but the overall risk of a humanitarian crisis may only be partially reduced if other hazards, such as threats of conflict or the impact of high food prices on vulnerable communities, are not simultaneously identified, assessed and planned for.

Implementing a risk management approach to humanitarian assistance

69. Applying a systematic and comprehensive risk management approach to crises involves the following steps. First, risk and vulnerability analyses carried out by Governments, development and humanitarian partners must be more closely integrated at the strategic and operational levels. They must also engage Governments, and local actors, particularly those that can assist with addressing the vulnerabilities of "at risk" groups. This requires sharing information, joint risk analysis, investing in capacity to analyse risks and improving trigger mechanisms for responding to increased risks.

70. Second, planning processes by Governments and humanitarian and development partners need to be more closely aligned around common objectives for managing crisis risk. Governments should coordinate planning wherever possible and partners should support capacity-building of national and local counterparts to participate in planning processes. In 2013, United Nations country teams in the Sahel countries will incorporate these two steps in their work with national Governments to develop country-level plans on resilience building. These plans will be underpinned by a joint risk and vulnerability assessment and analysis, and will build upon existing frameworks, policies and plans at the local, national and regional levels to ensure a strategic, coherent and joined-up approach between the Government and humanitarian and development partners at all levels.

71. Third, greater attention must be given to building the capacity of national and sub-national governments and local communities to better prepare, respond and recover from hazards. Early warning systems, social-safety net programmes, contingency planning, livestock and livelihood programmes and risk-proofing essential services such as water, health and education are examples of actions that humanitarian organizations can take to improve national and local capacity. More innovative risk transfer programming, for example, through insurance, should also be used. The R4 Rural Resilience Initiative, a partnership between WFP, Oxfam America and Swiss Re, will enable poor farmers to strengthen their food and income security through an insurance-for-work programme that enables food insecure farmers to work extra days on community disaster risk reduction projects in exchange for a drought insurance policy that will compensate them for losses should a drought occur.

72. Finally, investment for risk management must be increased through national, development and humanitarian channels. Despite evidence that demonstrates that crisis prevention is more effective and cheaper than response, it remains chronically underfunded. According to the Overseas Development Institute, funding for preparedness remains scarce, with little progress made in improving the ability of the international humanitarian system to track disaster risk reduction investment. From the data that is available, preparedness remains a low priority. As recorded by

the Financial Tracking Service, $6.3 billion in humanitarian contributions was provided for the first half of 2012, of which $80.2 million was for emergency preparedness, representing just 1.3 per cent of the total. Data from the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which includes a wider category of disaster prevention and preparedness activities, reveals that between 2005 and 2011, $2.4 billion was spent on disaster prevention and preparedness, only 3 per cent of the total spent on humanitarian assistance ($78.3 billion). More needs to be done to increase investment in preparedness at the country level, including through finding more appropriate channels for delivering preparedness financing, and improved systems to track it.

73. A number of processes are under way to identify priorities for the global development agenda beyond 2015, including the post-Millennium Development Goals, the Sustainable Development Goals agenda, and post-Hyogo Framework for Action on Disaster Risk Reduction. The post-2015 development agenda is a unique opportunity to ensure that sufficient priority is given to strategies and programming that can reduce and manage the risk of humanitarian crises. It is also an opportunity to further align humanitarian and development risk analysis and planning processes.

V. World humanitarian summit

74. The Secretary-General has prioritized strengthening humanitarian assistance and promoting humanitarian aid transparency and effectiveness in his Five-Year Action Agenda, with a particular focus on creating an international humanitarian system that is more inclusive. To share knowledge and best practices, the Secretary-General has also called for a world humanitarian summit in 2015.

75. The summit would provide a unique opportunity to bring together a diverse range of humanitarian stakeholders, including affected Member States, affected people, donors, international humanitarian organizations, NGOs, experts and academia to take stock of the changing environment, and agree on how to adapt ways of working and to set an agenda for making humanitarian action fit for the challenges of 2015 and beyond.

VI. Recommendations

76. On the basis of the above, I propose the following:

(a) **Member States, non-State actors and humanitarian organizations to continue to promote greater respect for and adherence to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence;**

(b) **Member States and, where applicable, non-State actors to facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian personnel and relief consignments to affected communities, including by simplifying and expediting procedures for humanitarian personnel and goods;**

(c) **Member States and relevant non-State actors to allow and engage in negotiations for humanitarian operations that are to be carried out in full adherence with humanitarian principles;**

(d) The United Nations and humanitarian organizations to consider the use of multi-year consolidated appeals for protracted crises; Member States and other donors are further encouraged to provide timely, flexible and predictable funding to protracted crises, including through the use of multi-year funding, and to adhere to the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship;

(e) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to continue to build their capacity to collect, analyse and share data, including through the use of data standards such as the IASC common operational datasets, in order to better support national and international planning and response;

(f) The United Nations and humanitarian organizations to continue to integrate preparedness, early action and early recovery approaches in humanitarian programming; Member States and other donors are further encouraged to ensure that preparedness work receives adequate resources, including from both humanitarian and development budgets;

(g) The United Nations and humanitarian organizations to continue to improve the collection and use of sex, age and disability disaggregated data, and to further strengthen the systematic integration of gender analysis and attention to the different needs of women, girls, boys and men, older people and persons with disabilities into humanitarian programming;

(h) Member States and non-State actors to adhere to their legal obligations, raise awareness and support efforts to respect and protect medical personnel, facilities, vehicles and services against attacks or threats, and ensure that the wounded and sick receive the medical care and attention they require;

(i) Member States, United Nations and humanitarian organizations to continue to work together to ensure that the protection needs of affected populations are addressed as a fundamental component of humanitarian response, including through providing timely and adequate resources;

(j) The United Nations to engage in consultations with all relevant stakeholders and review best practice on humanitarian effectiveness and to report back to Member States on progress made;

(k) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to continue to assess how innovation can be more systematically identified and integrated into humanitarian action, and share best practices and lessons learned on innovative tools and approaches that could improve the effectiveness of humanitarian action;

(l) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian and development organizations to improve sharing of information about risks that can lead to humanitarian crises, invest in building the capacity to analyse and communicate such risks and improve mechanisms for joint risk analysis and planning;

(m) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian and development organizations to continue to build the capacity of national and sub-national governments, local organizations and communities to better prepare for hazards and respond to and recover from disasters.

United Nations A/68/85

General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 May 2013
English
Original: Spanish

Sixty-eighth session
Item 115 (c) of the preliminary list*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fourteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 26 November 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Office of the President of the General Assembly and has the honour to refer to the candidature of the Government of Mexico to the Human Rights Council for the period 2014-2016 at the election to be held in New York in November 2013, during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

In this connection, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251, the Permanent Mission of Mexico is transmitting herewith a document entitled "Candidature of Mexico to the Human Rights Council, 2014-2016", and requests that this document be circulated as a document of the Assembly (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of Mexico wishes to note that the Government of Mexico is thereby submitting the voluntary pledges and commitments that Mexico undertakes to fulfil, should it be elected. The document also includes information on Mexico's contributions to the Human Rights Council and the actions it has taken in accordance with the commitments it undertook for its membership in 2009-2012.

* A/68/50.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 26 November 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Mexico to the Human Rights Council, 2014-2016

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

[Original: English, French and Spanish]

Mexico in the Human Rights Council: impact of its participation

1. Mexico has been a member of the Human Rights Council on two occasions (for the 2006-2009 and 2009-2012 terms). As a member of the Council, Mexico positioned itself as an actor with a tremendous sense of responsibility for promoting a cooperative approach, novel initiatives and timely action by this international body in response to critical human rights situations all over the world. In particular:

(a) Mexico campaigned for the creation of the Human Rights Council as a body that universally promotes and protects human rights and is capable of dealing with the situation of all human rights in any part of the world;

(b) As the Council's first President, Mexico strove to consolidate its mandate based on the principle of non-selectivity;

(c) Under Mexico's presidency, the Council established its institutional framework and operations and the tools that guide its work today, notably the universal periodic review mechanism;

(d) Under Mexico's presidency, the Council's institution-building was achieved through an inclusive, balanced and transparent process that led to a unanimous agreement to create a cooperation-based protection system;

(e) During the review of the Council's work and functioning, Mexico fostered open dialogue and encouraged proposals to reconcile diverse perspectives on how to strengthen the Council;

(f) Mexico advocated the adoption of procedures that increased the Council's institutional relevance, such as the one establishing a direct link between the Council and the General Assembly;

(g) Mexico helped to strengthen and broaden the participation of civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), national human rights institutions and other stakeholders in the Council's work;

(h) Mexico promoted the view that only States that uphold the highest international human rights standards should be eligible for election to the Council and was attentive to the human rights promotion and protection obligations incumbent on the States members of the Council;

(i) Mexico sought to include language establishing criteria and providing greater flexibility to enable the Council to react proportionally, effectively and less selectively to situations of human rights violations;

(j) Mexico's work within the Council was guided by the principles of universality, non-selectivity, balance and accountability;

(k) As the tenth-largest contributor to the regular budget of the United Nations, and as a constant advocate of increasing the budget allocated to human rights, Mexico has been a source of financial support for the human rights protection system.

The Human Rights Council six years after its establishment

2. The Council's review process, agreed to by the General Assembly in the resolution that established this organ, has triggered a productive and thoughtful analysis among regions. The main result of this process can be perceived in the dynamics of the Council's sessions and in the actions it has taken under the different agenda items, particularly on pressing situations of human rights violations.

3. It is important to maintain the atmosphere of analysis and dialogue resulting from that process. While the Council has ceased to define itself by excluding that which it does not wish to be, it is currently in a phase in which it needs to complete the process of establishing itself as the primary organ for dealing with one of the three pillars of the United Nations system. In this context, the Council faces challenges of three main types: political, institutional and normative.

4. As part of the political challenge, the Council needs to find a way to respond appropriately to human rights violations and to react to them in a swift and timely manner.

5. The institutional challenge includes the need to increase the supply of cooperation in its broadest sense, thereby ensuring that countries cannot cite a lack of cooperation or their level of development to justify protection gaps. Above all, the Council should provide States with the tools they need to establish and consolidate effective regulatory frameworks and public policies that promote human rights. Cooperation also plays a fundamental role in prevention. Moreover, transparency should continue to be the basic principle underpinning the Council's own actions.

6. Lastly, as part of the normative challenge, the Council needs to rationalize the international regulatory framework for human rights. While there is already a range of human rights provisions, some treaty-based ("hard law") and others non-treaty-based ("soft law"), there is a continuous risk of generating "legislative inflation", whose results will not necessarily guarantee that human rights will be adequately safeguarded. Greater coherence is needed in the international normative framework.

A vision for the Human Rights Council

7. In the current context, the Human Rights Council must address these challenges in order to become an organ that:

(a) Spearheads change and does not limit itself to following events and reacting only in case of crisis;

(b) Serves primarily as a forum for cooperation in which members find elements to anchor the establishment of State policies on human rights, thanks to their cooperation with the international human rights system;

(c) Strengthens its crisis response capacity and treats urgent situations objectively.

Mexico's commitments to the promotion and protection of human rights (2014-2016)

8. Mexico's interest in actively participating in the work of the Human Rights Council arises from its recognition of the advantages of cooperating with international human rights bodies in order to fulfil its obligations in that area and in terms of building an international culture of respect for and promotion of human rights.

9. Mexico's aspiration to be a member of the Council for the 2014-2016 term is backed by its previous experience as a founding member of the Council, the role it played in the institution-building process and the notable developments that have taken place in recent years at the national level.

10. Mexico advocated the balanced treatment of the different items that make up the Council's broad agenda and promoted a culture of understanding and dialogue among delegations in order to reach creative solutions even in the most complex of subject matters. In consistently seeking to ensure that the Council's actions help to improve the promotion and protection of human rights on the ground, Mexico emphasized the progressive use of the tools available to the Council in order to respond adequately to different situations.

11. For the period 2014-2016, Mexico makes the following commitments related to the strengthening of and collaboration with the international system, compliance with the country's international obligations and domestic application of international standards:

(a) Contribute to the strengthening of the international human rights system and, especially, to the consolidation of the Human Rights Council in conformity with the June 2011 reform of the Mexican Constitution, which establishes the observance, protection and promotion of human rights as guiding principles of foreign policy;

(b) Foster the objective and effective treatment of human rights situations in any part of the world;

(c) Advocate the ongoing development of international human rights standards in order to fill any protection gaps and improve the coherence of the international normative framework;

(d) Remain an active and constructive participant in the Council in order to enable that organ to play an effective role in disseminating an international human rights culture and in engaging in two-way cooperation with the international human rights system in order to strengthen national structures;

(e) Consolidate the universal periodic review mechanism as a highly effective tool for cooperation, while ensuring that it is not seen merely as a forum for addressing chronic human rights violations, and intensify efforts to change national structures, particularly in the areas of institution-building, civil service training, dissemination of a human rights culture and broadening of dialogue with civil society;

(f) Ensure that the Human Rights Council has the budget it needs to carry out its activities, given that human rights constitute the third pillar of the United Nations;

(g) Promote the effectiveness and ensure the autonomy and independence of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and of the special procedures of the Council;

(h) Mainstream human rights in the work of the United Nations, based on the interrelationship among the development, security and human rights pillars, and promote coordination and complementarity between the work of the Council and that of the General Assembly and other organs;

(i) Comply with its international obligations, particularly those related to the submission of reports on the implementation of human rights treaties; establish effective mechanisms for following up on the recommendations of treaty bodies; and promote the strengthening of the treaty body system;

(j) Continue its policy of openness to all international human rights bodies and mechanisms and of collaboration with them in following up on their recommendations and supporting their mandates in the competent international forums;

(k) Pursue its collaboration with the regional system and comply with the judgements of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the recommendations of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights;

(l) At the domestic level, redouble its efforts to ensure appropriate constitutional reforms with respect to human rights, particularly with a view to the incorporation of international standards into national laws and public policies.

Accountability: actions taken by Mexico in compliance with its commitments (2009-2012)

A. Actions at the international level

Active participation in international human rights forums

12. Since the establishment of the Human Rights Council, Mexico has been widely acknowledged for its active and committed involvement in consolidating the Council as the primary United Nations organ for the protection and promotion of human rights worldwide.

13. Over the two terms in which Mexico was a member of the Human Rights Council, it encouraged international cooperation on human rights and promoted the Council's consideration of innovative and relevant issues and of human rights situations requiring the attention of the international community.

14. Under Mexico's presidency, the Human Rights Council reached agreement on an institution-building package and defined its working methods and tools. Mexico presided over an open and transparent process that culminated in a unanimous agreement that continues to reflect the necessary balance and a commitment to creating an effective, cooperation-based protection system equipped with the necessary mechanisms for addressing situations that require the Council's attention.

15. During the Council's review process, five years after its establishment, Mexico reaffirmed its stance in favour of promoting an inclusive dialogue with a view to reconciling diverse viewpoints and taking further concrete action to strengthen that organ.

16. With respect to the promotion of the highest international human rights standards, Mexico has advocated initiatives not only within the Council, but also in the United Nations and Organization of American States (OAS) General Assemblies, on the rights of women, migrants, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples, the protection of human rights while countering terrorism and the rights of internally displaced persons, detainees and human rights defenders.

17. An example of this is the presentation, along with Colombia, of the resolution that in 2010 established the working group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, whose work includes the identification and promotion of good practices conducive to the elimination of this obstacle.

18. Likewise, Mexico supported the establishment, in 2010, of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, for the study of experiences and challenges related to these rights.

19. Another aspect that merits attention is Mexico's groundbreaking stance in proposing, together with Turkey and in the framework of the nineteenth regular session of the Human Rights Council (2012), a novel initiative regarding birth registration and the right of everyone to recognition everywhere as a person before the law. This resolution, which had 117 sponsors, provides an essential foundation for the full exercise of children's rights.

20. In 2012 Mexico was also one of the countries that promoted the resolution on the right of women and children to a nationality, specifically with a view to protecting them from abuse and exploitation, especially trafficking, due to lack of access to birth registration, property ownership and employment.

21. Mexico has continued to support the human rights agenda in all United Nations forums, including the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and this has translated into the strengthening of the mandate and the resources needed for the functioning of human rights mechanisms.

22. Mexico was instrumental in ensuring that the General Assembly provided the resources needed to finance the Council's non-scheduled activities (special sessions and commissions of inquiry), supporting the Office of the President of the Human Rights Council and endorsing requests for the extension of treaty bodies' sessions for the consideration of reports. Mexico also makes voluntary contributions to the regular budget of OHCHR, other thematic mechanisms of the Council and the United Nations agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment.

23. Furthermore, Mexico has sought to promote an integrated approach to ensure the indivisibility, complementarity and universality of all human rights and their incorporation into other processes, such as the follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the rule of law at the national and international levels.

24. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council (2009-2010), Mexico maintained a firm stance in favour of international law and respect for human rights in resolving conflicts and consolidating peace. Accordingly, Mexico supported the establishment of an Office of the Ombudsperson to promote fair and clear procedures in the framework of the counter-terrorism sanctions regime. Mexico also chaired the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, and

strengthened its work following the adoption of resolution 1882 (2009). Mexico also promoted gender mainstreaming, prevention of sexual violence and active participation by women in mediation and peacebuilding processes.

Openness and full cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and other relevant actors

25. Mexico maintains a standing and open invitation to all international, regional and universal human rights mechanisms. Consequently, from the time Mexico became a member of the Council to the present (2006-2012), 15 mechanisms on such wide-ranging issues as migrants' rights, torture and children have visited the country. Mexico is convinced that their experience and professionalism can serve to strengthen the public policy framework and the implementation of international obligations.

26. In particular, since its re-election in 2009, Mexico has received the following visits:

(a) Rapporteur for Mexico of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (27-29 September 2011);

(b) Rapporteur on Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (25 July-2 August 2011);

(c) United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (4-8 July 2011);

(d) United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food (13-20 June 2011);

(e) United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (18-31 March 2011);

(f) United Nations Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers (1-15 October 2010);

(g) Joint visit by the United Nations and Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Special Rapporteurs on the right to freedom of expression (9-24 August 2010);

(h) United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to education (8-18 February 2010).

27. Mexico also attaches great importance to the process of drafting and presenting periodic reports to treaty bodies, as it represents an opportunity to take stock of the domestic protection of human rights and, on that basis, to design public policies for its improvement. Mexico is practically up to date with the presentation of treaty body reports and promotes national mechanisms to follow up on their recommendations. In recent years, the following reports have been drafted and presented:

(a) Combined seventh and eighth periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (considered in 2012 and submitted in 2010);

(b) Combined sixteenth and seventeenth periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (considered in 2012 and submitted in 2010);

(c) Second periodic report to the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (considered in 2011 and submitted in 2010);

(d) Initial report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (considered in 2011 and submitted in 2008);

(e) Initial report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (considered in 2011 and submitted in 2008);

(f) Fifth periodic report to the Human Rights Committee on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (considered in 2010 and submitted in 2008);

(g) Combined fifth and sixth periodic report to the Committee against Torture (to be considered in November 2012, submitted in 2011); the fourth report to this Committee was considered in 2007;

(h) Combined fourth and fifth report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (submitted in 2012);

(i) Initial report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (submitted in 2011).

28. Mexico has presented its national report, which was considered by the universal periodic review mechanism on 10 February 2009. Strenuous efforts have been made to implement the recommendations that were made to Mexico in the context of the 2008-2012 National Human Rights Programme.

29. The universal periodic review has been of great value to Mexico. Among the most important achievements that have resulted from implemented recommendations are the constitutional human rights and *amparo* reforms; the migration reform; the decision of the Supreme Court of Justice to restrict military jurisdiction so that members of the armed forces who commit human rights violations are tried in civilian courts; and measures to protect freedom of expression, including the classification of offences against journalists as federal offences.

30. As part of its policy of respect for the establishment and strengthening of international human rights protection mechanisms, Mexico is making every effort to comply fully with the judgements of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the decisions of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, by adopting domestic measures for their adequate implementation.

Ongoing dialogue with civil society

31. As part of its policy of openness and cooperation, Mexico maintains a dialogue with civil society and with national and international human rights NGOs. In the domestic sphere, Mexico has a vigorous, active civil society that closely monitors the promotion and protection of human rights.

32. The Mexican Government has a Commission on Government Human Rights Policy as a forum for dialogue between the federal public administration and civil society organizations. The Government maintains a close relationship with civil

society, including in the drafting of treaty body reports and in complying with international obligations.

33. This collaboration also extends to the international sphere, as Mexico maintains an open dialogue with the main international human rights and civil society organizations in other countries. Additionally, Mexico has played a significant role in supporting the participation of civil society organizations in the Human Rights Council and has also fostered the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives in the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, to be held in September 2014.

Collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

34. Given the importance that Mexico attaches to cooperation for the promotion of human rights, an OHCHR country office was established in Mexico a decade ago at the country's request. Since then, Mexico has maintained fruitful cooperation with that office and has received five visits from heads of OHCHR. The most recent visits were those of High Commissioners Navi Pillay in July 2011 and Louise Arbour in February 2008.

35. As part of a joint initiative between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, OHCHR and the Centre for Economic Research and Teaching, in 2011 a public website was established (http://recomendacionesdh.mx/) on which international human rights recommendations to Mexico have been systematized as a public policy tool that allows new advances in this area.

B. Actions at the national level

Legislative harmonization

36. The constitutional reforms on human rights (2011), *amparo* proceedings (2011) and the criminal justice system (2008), the migration reform and the decisions of the Supreme Court of Justice to restrict military jurisdiction in cases of human rights violations (2011-2012) constitute some of the most important advances of the past few years in the protection of fundamental rights in Mexico.

37. Mexico is currently witnessing the greatest expansion of its legal framework for human rights. This will have a vital impact on the acceleration of legislative harmonization, as the highest international human rights standards are incorporated at all levels of government. Among the main actions are those highlighted in paragraphs 38-45 below.

38. In June 2011, a constitutional reform on human rights was enacted, through which the human rights provided for in international treaties to which Mexico is a party are incorporated into the constitutional catalogue of human rights. The reform also incorporates the *pro personae* principle of legal interpretation and the State's obligations to prevent, investigate, punish and redress human rights violations, as well as the obligations of all authorities to promote, respect, protect and guarantee those rights. It includes respect for human rights as a foreign policy principle, strengthens the powers of human rights protection entities in Mexico and creates a general normative framework for the country's human rights policy.

39. In addition, June 2011 saw the entry into force of a constitutional reform related to *amparo*, the jurisdictional concept par excellence for the protection of fundamental rights. This reform, in addition to serving as a basis for a comprehensive reform of *amparo*, was aimed at extending the scope of *amparo* proceedings to include the protection of human rights.

40. Between January and May 2011, Mexico introduced several legal changes that ushered in a new era in migratory issues. These changes include the enactment of a Refugee and Complementary Protection Act whose provisions are based on best institutional practices, as well as a new Migration Act that, among other things, decriminalizes migration and recognizes the rights of access to justice, education, health and civil registration for migrants and members of their families, regardless of their migration status.

41. All three branches of government have been involved in harmonizing the domestic legal framework — and the administration of justice — with the international obligations undertaken by the country. In 2011, the Supreme Court of Justice determined that an article of the Code of Military Justice was incompatible with the American Convention on Human Rights and, as a result of that analysis, established the restriction of military jurisdiction in cases in which members of the armed forces commit human rights violations. The Court added that judges should apply a "treaty test" to verify the compatibility of their decisions with the international human rights treaties to which Mexico is a party.

42. In October 2011, the Constitution was reformed to recognize the right of every person to nutritious, sufficient and quality food; the reform also clearly defined the State's responsibility to guarantee this right. In February 2012, article 3 of the Constitution was amended to make upper secondary education mandatory, as a way to strengthen equality of rights, and article 4 was reformed to include, for the first time, the right to a healthy environment and the right to sufficient and affordable access to and availability of healthy and acceptable treated water for personal and household use, as well as the State's responsibility to guarantee this right.

43. In May 2011, the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities Act was promulgated. This general law lays the foundation for harmonizing domestic legislation with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified in 2007, and for mandating the implementation of public policies to benefit this sector.

44. In June 2012, the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists Act entered into force. This law establishes a mechanism for the protection of human rights defenders and journalists and provides for a series of gradual measures to guarantee their rights to life, integrity, liberty and security.

45. Also in June 2012, an amendment to the Constitution was published whereby the federal authorities also have jurisdiction with regard to non-federal offences committed against journalists, persons or facilities in violation of the right to freedom of expression or the right to information.

Institutional strengthening and human rights policymaking

46. Mexico has strengthened its institutional structures for the promotion and protection of human rights:

(a) The 2008-2012 National Human Rights Programme, which is mandatory for all institutions of the federal executive branch, strengthens the mainstreaming of human rights in public administration;

(b) The National Human Rights Commission now has the power to investigate cases of grave human rights violations and to file complaints as a result of such investigations;

(c) The country has established a National Commission to Prevent and Eradicate Violence against Women(2009), professionalized the National Migration Institute to strengthen its ability to address and protect the rights of migrants (2011) and broadened the powers of the National Council for the Development and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (2011).

Human rights and security

47. In recent years Mexico has faced the challenge of organized crime and has made enormous efforts to guarantee that actions to counter organized crime are carried out with the strictest respect for human rights and legality. Mexico has preserved the security of its citizens while complying with internal policies and international commitments with regard to security.

48. To that end, a policy of constant training and modernization of the security forces of the three branches of government has been carried out, particularly with regard to respect for human rights.

49. In December 2011 the authorities announced institution-building measures on several fronts, including the establishment of protocols to regulate the legitimate use of force by federal and ministerial police, soldiers and sailors; protocols regarding arrest and presentation of detainees before a competent authority; and protocols for the preservation of evidence and the chain of custody when a crime has been committed.

50. Collaboration with the National Human Rights Commission continues; in 2011, the recommendations received by the Ministry of Defence (25) and the Ministry of the Navy (6) were accepted in full.

51. In addition, human rights structures for the protection of children and victims of violence, as well as the systematization of information on missing persons, have been strengthened. For example, a law enforcement protocol for the protection of minors has been introduced and a national registry of data on lost or missing persons has been established.

United Nations A/68/86

General Assembly

Distr.: General
27 May 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Item 136 of the preliminary list*
Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

Internal oversight: proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

Report of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee

Summary

The present report reflects the comments, advice and recommendations of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee on the Office of Internal Oversight Services proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

* A/68/50.

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I. Introduction

1. The Independent Audit Advisory Committee has undertaken a review of the proposed programme budget for the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for the biennium 2014-2015 in accordance with paragraph 2 (d) of its terms of reference (see resolution 61/275, annex). The Committee's responsibility in this respect is to review the budget proposal of OIOS, taking into account its workplan, and to make recommendations to the General Assembly through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The present report contains the Committee's comments, advice and recommendations relating to the OIOS proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 for consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the General Assembly.

2. The Programme Planning and Budget Division of the Department of Management provided the Committee with the internal oversight section of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 as well as with relevant supplementary information. OIOS also provided other supplementary information relating to its budget proposal, which the Committee took into consideration. At its twenty-second session, held from 10 to 12 April 2013, the Committee allocated a significant proportion of its agenda to discussions with OIOS, as well as the Controller, on the OIOS budget.

3. The Committee would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Programme Planning and Budget Division in expediting the preparation of the internal oversight section of the budget for review by the Committee. The Committee also appreciates the cooperation and responsiveness on the part of OIOS in providing information for the preparation of the present report.

II. Review of the proposed programme budget for the Office of Internal Oversight Services for the biennium 2014-2015

4. The projected resources for OIOS for the biennium 2014-2015, from the regular budget and other assessed and extrabudgetary funds combined, total $121,063,000, compared with a revised estimate of $104,323,200 for 2012-2013. The Committee noted that while the overall regular budget of OIOS after recosting showed a 16 per cent increase, that increase was owing mainly to increases in other assessed and extrabudgetary components which rose by 32.1 and 5.7 per cent, respectively, from $46,732,200 and $16,870,800 for 2012-2013 to an estimated $61,736,700 and $17,838,400 for 2014-2015. The increase is attributable primarily to peacekeeping operations activities for 2014/15, as illustrated in table 1 below.

Table 1
Financial resources by component
(Thousands of United States Dollars)

Component	*2010-2011 expenditure*	*Percentage share*	*2012-2013 resources at revised rate*	*Percentage share*	*2014-2015 estimate*	*Percentage share*	*Resource growth*	
							As a percentage of 2010-2011 expenditure	*As a percentage of 2012-2013 resources at revised rate*
Regular budget	**35 006.8**	**37.8**	**40 720.2**	**39.0**	**41 487.9**	**34.3**	**18.5**	**1.9**
Other assessed	**47 773.8**	**51.7**	**46 732.2**	**39.0**	**61 736.7**	**51.0**	**29.2**	**32.1**
Services in support of:								
International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda	644.1	0.7	775.6	0.7	775.8	0.6	20.4	0
International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia	526.8	0.6	706.6	0.7	708.4	0.6	34.5	0.3
Capital master plan	706.0	0.8	1 315.3	1.3	869.7	0.7	23.2	(33.9)
Peacekeeping operations activities	45 896.9	49.6	43 934.7	42.1	59 382.8	49.1	29.4	35.2
Extrabudgetary	**9 711.4**	**10.5**	**16 870.8**	**16.2**	**17 838.4**	**14.7**	**83.7**	**5.7**
United Nations organizations	7 382.4	8.0	13 972.5	13.4	14 972.5	12.4	102.8	7.2
Support for extrabudgetary substantive activities	1 856.7	2.0	2 269.0	2.2	2 250.8	1.9	21.2	(0.8)
Technical cooperation activities	472.3	0.5	629.3	0.6	615.1	0.5	30.2	(2.3)
Total	**92 492.0**	**100**	**104 323.2**	**100**	**121 063.0**	**100**	**30.9**	**16.0**

Note: Budget figures are based on documents A/66/6 (Sect. 31) and A/68/6 (Sect. 30) and the relevant supplementary information.

5. The proposed programme budget for OIOS for the biennium 2014-2015 (regular budget) is estimated at $40,330,200 (before recosting), which is a decrease of $390,000, or 1 per cent. However, the figures after recosting show an increase of $767,700, or 1.9 per cent, compared with the 2012-2013 resources at revised rates. Comparison between the 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 bienniums in the present report uses values before recosting, which excludes estimated increases owing to inflation and currency fluctuations, in order to facilitate comparison of the base budget.

6. Table 2 presents the regular budget proposal for OIOS for the biennium 2014-2015 as compared with the appropriation/actual expenditure for the biennium 2010-2011 and resources for the biennium 2012-2013 at revised rates.

Table 2
Financial resources by programme
(Thousands of United States Dollars)

	2010-2011		*2012-2013*	*2014-2015*	*Variance (percentage)*		
	Revised appropriation	*Expenditure*	*Resources at revised rates*	*Proposed budget (before recosting)*	*2014-2015 compared with 2010-2011 appropriation*	*2014-2015 compared with 2010-2011 expenditure*	*2014-2015 compared with 2012-2013 appropriation*
A. Executive direction and management	2 403.0	2 280.1	41.3	3 206.5	33.4	40.6	17.0
B. Programme of work	33 901.1	30 602.1	35 241.4	34 520.5	1.8	12.8	(2.0)
Subprogramme 1. Internal audit	15 522.7	14 211.6	16 291.3	15 433.9	(0.6)	8.6	(5.3)
Subprogramme 2. Inspection and evaluation	7 078.8	7 425.8	43.4	8 015.6	13.2	7.9	6.3
Subprogramme 3. Investigations	11 299.6	8 964.7	11 406.7	11 071.0	(2.0)	23.5	(2.9)
C. Programme support costs	2 620.9	2 124.6	37.5	2 603.2	(0.7)	22.5	(4.9)
Total	**38 925.0**	**35 006.8**	**40 720.2**	**40 330.2**	**3.6**	**15.2**	**(1.0)**

Note: Budget figures are based on documents A/66/6 (Sect. 31) and A/68/6 (Sect. 30) and the relevant supplementary information.

7. The 1 per cent decrease in the budget compared with the 2012-2013 biennium is mainly the result of the reduction of four posts (2 D-1, 1 P-2/1 and 1 General Service (Other level)) from the three subprogrammes. In addition to the proposed reduction of the four posts, OIOS has proposed the redeployment of five posts (in subprogramme 3, Investigations) within the subprogrammes between duty stations.

A. Executive direction and management

8. The proposed number of posts in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services for the biennium 2014-2015 remains unchanged at eight. The 17 per cent increase in resources was owing mainly to the delayed impact of the post at the level of Assistant Secretary-General and the cost of the proposed replacement of the Auto Audit and Issue Track programmes with one that was web-based.

9. With respect to the Assistant Secretary-General post, the Committee also recalled paragraph 8 of its previous report (A/66/85) in which it endorsed the creation of the post so as, inter alia, to foster the overall departmental strategy and intradepartmental cooperation initiatives. During its discussion with OIOS, the Committee was informed of the current strategy whereby the Internal Audit Division would report directly to the Assistant Secretary-General, and the Investigations Division and the Inspection and Evaluation Division would report directly to the Under-Secretary-General. **While welcoming those initiatives, which are aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of OIOS, the Committee recommends that such initiatives not create the very silo effect among the divisions that the creation of the Assistant Secretary-General post was meant to mitigate.**

10. With respect to the proposed web-based system for tracking OIOS recommendations, the Committee recalled paragraph 25 of General Assembly

resolution 65/270 which requested the Secretary-General to invite relevant oversight bodies to explore the possibility of utilizing the web-based system of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) to enhance coordination. The Committee inquired as to whether OIOS would use the system recently launched by JIU or create its own. The Committee was informed that in the light of the business case developed for this web-based programme, upon approval of the budget, OIOS would review all the systems available, including the one used by JIU, to determine which system would best fit the needs of the Office. **The Committee welcomes the effort OIOS is making to improve its recommendation monitoring and audit process and recommends that OIOS continue to enhance the coordination among oversight bodies in accordance with resolution 65/270, as well as to ensure that the needs of stakeholders, including client offices/departments, continue to be taken into consideration in this regard.**

B. Programme of work

Subprogramme 1
Internal audit

11. The proposed programme budget for subprogramme 1, Internal audit, for the biennium 2014-2015, is $15,433,900 (before recosting). This amount represents a net decrease of $857,400, or 5.3 per cent, compared with the appropriation of $16,291,300 for the biennium 2012-2013. The Committee was informed that the decrease in the overall cost for the subprogramme was owing primarily to the reduction of the post requirements for internal audit from the 48 approved in the biennium 2012-13 to the 46 in the proposed budget for 2014-2015.

Residual risk and capacity gap assessment

12. The Committee continued to hold extensive discussions with OIOS on the audit work planning process to ascertain how the Internal Audit Division takes such workplans into account in determining the level of resources required to deliver the programme of work. The Committee continues to maintain that using risk assessments to prioritize and allocate audit resources is a best practice initiative which the Committee supported in its previous reports on the budget for OIOS. In the light of the current financial environment, the Committee has continued to press OIOS to review and refine its risk-based workplan assumptions to determine the best utilization of available resources.

13. In this respect, the Committee was informed that in preparation of the internal audit workplan for 2014-2015, the Division had identified the top organizational risks that might hinder the Secretariat from achieving its objectives, and the possible causes of such risks and, in addition, the related key controls, so as to prioritize audit assignments for 2014-2015. In this regard, OIOS informed the Committee that it would continue to improve its methodology of identifying areas of significant residual risk, together with increased use of horizontal audits.

14. In paragraph 12 of its previous report (A/66/85), the Committee took note that OIOS planned to audit the internal controls as a basis to arrive at the residual risk faced by the Organization. During its deliberations, the Committee followed up with OIOS on progress in this regard. OIOS clarified that it had improved its

methodology for risk assessment and the workplan process to allow for the systematic assessment of residual risk from the audit universe.

15. **While acknowledging the progress achieved thus far, the Committee believes that there is still room for improvement with respect to a systematic assessment of residual risk. This is all the more important, as the Organization faces a challenging financial situation, which is forcing many departments/offices to do more with less, implying that a more adaptable and responsive oversight regime is critical.**

16. In the meantime, OIOS indicated that the abolishment of one post at the D-1 level in the Nairobi Office and one General Service post in the New York Office would not affect the attainment of its objectives. Based on its workplan, OIOS proposes to produce up to 450 audit reports for programme managers during the biennium (up from 400 planned for the biennium 2012-2013). Of those, 130 reports (65 per year) will be for programmes funded under the regular budget.

17. **Notwithstanding that the level of residual risk on which the current workplan is based is still evolving, the Committee reviewed and accepted the assurance of OIOS that the prioritization in the audit workplan would address the highest risks in the Organization. Accordingly, the Committee endorses the resource requirements for the Internal Audit Division as presented.**

Subprogramme 2
Inspection and evaluation

18. The proposed programme budget for the inspection and evaluation subprogramme amounts to $8,015,600 (before recosting), representing a net increase of $472,200, or 6.3 per cent, compared with the appropriation of $7,543,400 for the biennium 2012-2013. The net increase is owing primarily to staff and other staff costs. In spite of a proposed reduction of one post at the D-1 level, the delayed impact of the six posts created in the previous biennium has led to a 4.1 per cent increase in staff costs. At the same time, in order to address the impact of the above reduction in staffing levels, the Committee was informed that "other staff" costs had increased by $235,300 (representing costs for general temporary assistance for 2014).

Risk assessment and capacity gap analysis

19. With respect to risk assessment, the Committee was informed that that the Inspection and Evaluation Division had moved away from using proxy indicators to a new approach that uses a combination of direct risk information from the Internal Audit Division, assessment of the monitoring and evaluation capacity, and an analysis of the priorities set by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and other stakeholders. Accordingly, the Inspection and Evaluation Division indicated that by the end of the biennium 2014-2015, it would have completed the evaluation of all top-risk programmes and five of the medium-risk ones. At this rate, the Division expects to complete a full cycle of evaluation of all Secretariat programmes by the biennium 2016-2017, 10 years after the creation of the Division.

20. In its prior reports, the Committee recommended that OIOS conduct capacity gap analysis based on residual risk assessment. The Committee also recalled paragraph 15 of its previous report (A/66/85) where it was informed of the decision to reduce the evaluation cycle from 11-13 years to 8 years as approved by the

Committee for Programme and Coordination in the 2012-2013 strategic framework and by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/244.

21. With respect to the capacity gap analysis, OIOS had indicated that to be able to evaluate all Secretariat entities (as well as prioritizing for more frequent evaluations of the high-risk entities and the completion of other recurring Inspection and Evaluation Division evaluation products; namely, thematic evaluations, triennial reviews and biennial reports) within an eight-year cycle, the Inspection and Evaluation Division would require an additional post of Evaluation Team Leader (P-4), two posts of Evaluation Officer (P-3), and one post of Associate Evaluation Officer (P-2). However, OIOS is not requesting the additional resources at this time. The Committee was informed that OIOS was aware of the financial situation and that it expected to realize efficiencies within the Division, including enhancement of the evaluation methodology.

22. **The Committee is mindful of the environment OIOS is working under, yet at the same time realizes that an effective and robust internal oversight function is essential for the Organization to achieve its objectives. The Committee is also aware that risk-based workplanning has yet to become robust enough to be the sole determinant of resource levels. While the Committee supports the reorganization of the Inspection and Evaluation Division, it is not in a position to provide an opinion on the efficacy of reducing the resources of the Division at this time. Even as it appreciates the improvements the Division has made in its risk-assessment approach, the Committee recommends that OIOS work on enhancing its risk assessment capacity and reassess its workplans to address the provisions of General Assembly resolution 65/244 in which the Assembly called for a reduction in the evaluation cycle.**

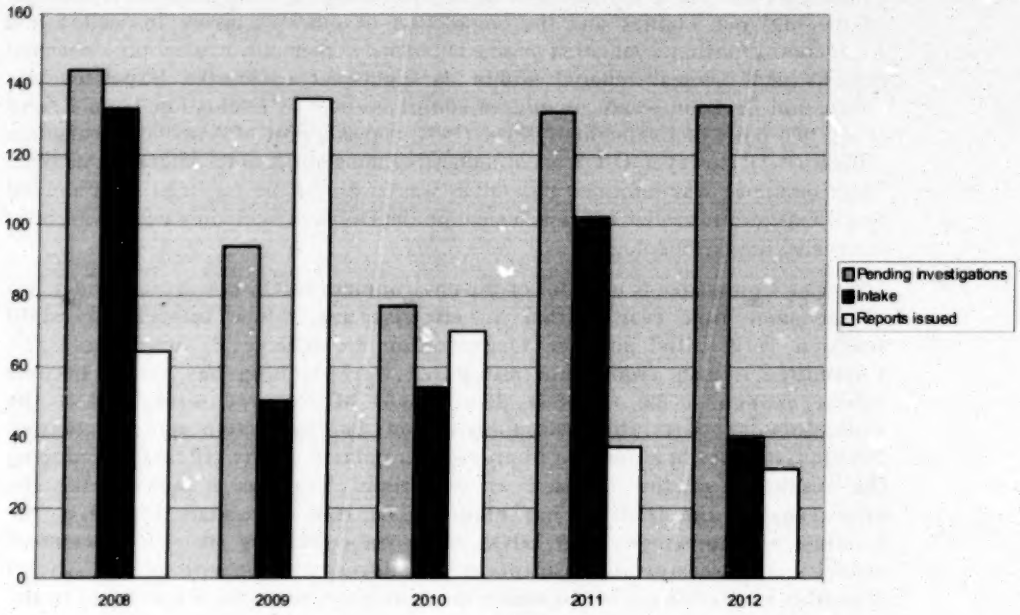
Subprogramme 3
Investigations

23. The proposed programme budget for subprogramme 3, Investigations, for the biennium 2014-2015 amounts to $11,071,000 (before recosting), representing a net decrease of $335,700, or 2.9 per cent, compared with the appropriation of $11,406,700 for the biennium 2012-2013. The reduction in the budget is attributable mainly to the proposed abolishment of one post at the P-2 level and a reduction in travel costs. The Independent Audit Advisory Committee was also informed that OIOS planned to redeploy five posts within the Investigations Division.

24. According to OIOS, the workplan for investigations is defined in large part by the need to strengthen the investigations function while maintaining the current level of productivity without any material increase in staff resources. The investigations workplan comprises three parts, namely, the investigations caseload (which is largely demand driven), internal projects to strengthen the investigations function, and management and administrative tasks. According to information provided by OIOS (see figure below), the intake levels have been declining from a high of about 130 cases in 2008 to only 40 in 2012. The above trend notwithstanding, the number of cases pending investigation remained consistently high in 2011 and 2012, at 130. The Committee observed instances where investigations took more than one year to conclude. **The Committee continues to be concerned at the extended length of time it takes OIOS to finalize investigations and recommends that a concerted effort be made to address this problem.**

Figure
Caseload trends for the regular budget

Regular budget caseload of the Investigations Division, OIOS



Source: OIOS

25. With regard to the caseload, the Committee inquired about the reason for the decline in intake and was informed that there could be several factors contributing to that trend, including the possible absence of proper outreach/awareness, that was hindering the reporting of potential cases. OIOS also indicated that the intake in 2011 represented an anomaly owing to the large number of cases of health insurance fraud (59) that had led to the apparent spike. The Committee expressed the belief that the declining trends could be an all the more compelling reason for OIOS to embark on a proactive and risk-based workplan. With respect to the proactive risk assessment, the Committee recalled paragraph 20 of its previous report (A/66/85), in which it had welcomed the fact that the Investigations Division had agreed to incorporate a more proactive and risk-based approach to its workplan. **During the Committee's deliberations, OIOS indicated that the Investigations Division had improved its forensic capacity as well as its capacity in procurement fraud-related irregularities. Moreover, OIOS further indicated that it was establishing a proactive investigations unit to further assess risk-based matters, including high-risk procurement matters. The Committee welcomes those two initiatives and looks forward to receiving updates in this respect in future sessions.**

26. In the light of the above, given that the proposed programme budget for investigations for 2014-2015 continues to be based on the five-year historical average of intake (which is declining) rather than on the investigations workplan, and without prejudice to the results of the recent task force on investigations, the

Committee cannot provide an overall assurance as to the adequacy of the proposed level of the budget for investigations.

27. Included in the budget is the previous proposal to redeploy five posts within the investigations subprogramme as part of the organizational restructuring to strengthen the investigations function. OIOS continues to justify the redeployment of investigations staff by citing: (a) the need to facilitate its effort to effectively address the remaining caseload of the Procurement Task Force, which had been transferred to the Investigations Division at the beginning of 2009; (b) less demand for procurement investigations in Nairobi; (c) the demand for investigation reports of higher quality and post-investigation support expected from the new system for the administration of justice; and (d) the need to strengthen the work of the Digital Forensic Unit. **In principle, as stated in its previous reports (A/62/814 and Add.1, A/63/703, A/64/86 and A/66/85), the Committee continues to support the restructuring as proposed by OIOS.**

C. Programme support

28. The proposed budget for programme support for the biennium 2014-2015 amounts to $2,603,200 (before recosting). That amount represents a reduction of $134,300, or 4.9 per cent, compared with the appropriation of $2,737,500 for the biennium 2012-2013. The number of posts remains unchanged, at eight. The decrease in non-post resources is attributable mainly to reductions in general temporary assistance and contractual services.

III. Conclusion

29. The members of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee respectfully present the present report containing its comments and recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) J. Christopher **Mihm**
Chair, Independent Audit Advisory Committee

(*Signed*) Vadim V. **Dubinkin**
Vice-Chair, Independent Audit Advisory Committee

(*Signed*) John F. S. **Muwanga**
Member, Independent Audit Advisory Committee

(*Signed*) Vinod **Rai**
Member, Independent Audit Advisory Committee

(*Signed*) Adrian P. **Strachan**
Member, Independent Audit Advisory Committee